1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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County Clare

438 to the north and as far as Killadysert to the south. In the direction of Limerick, the metropolis of southwest Ireland, however, the influence of Ennis ends at Newmarket-on-Fergus, a scant five miles off.

491 Today the roads both great and small provide all-weather
494 routes for every kind of local traffic. They carry many lorries
● 496 and not a few buses in competition with the only local railroad — the small and winding West Clare Railroad, which joins Kilrush and Kilkee to Ennis and Limerick in the east, and Gort and Galway in the north, tapping Ennistymon and Corrofin on the way through, all this in the roundabout leisurely fashion of the earlier days of railroading.

491 The main roads are much more direct. They follow divides and occasionally cut right across high bog country. Today they negotiate bogs, which once would have prohibited any sort of transportation during wet weather, by dint of side ditches and high crowns of gravel and dirt. Over high country they have better foundations and wander in comparatively straight fashion through the country.

491 At various points along these main roads there are
653 branches today penetrating the countryside. These are rougher and simpler constructions of crushed stones taken from local quarries, leased by the County Council. The stone is broken by laborers and small farmers of the district through which the road runs. In the case of the smaller roads each landholder is responsible for the bit of the road that runs by his land. "Road metal," as the crushed stone is called, is spread during the late autumn, winter, or very early spring. When the weather is dry, in summer, a fine white dust rises after every vehicle. But in the rainy months of spring and winter the roads are soft and full of chuck holes, and new stones must be laid down. Then the heavy [493] iron-tired carts of the farmers break them further and press them into the soft roadbeds.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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They are market-towns and administrative seats. 361
Their economics is that of distribution, not production. The industrial revolution has passed southern Ireland by. The shop, the pub, the fair bring the towns their life-blood and link them to their hinterlands and to the outside world. Many of them still collect market tolls on rural produce, as if they still had a ring of stone-wall fortification about them. Many of them have no fair green but throw open all their streets to shouting, bargaining men and milling cattle, on the day of the fair, surrendering themselves entirely to the countryside upon which they live.

One still approaches many of them today as one approached them in the sixteenth century, [491]
although now perhaps an automobile road breaks a new entrance into them or the railroad halts a [496]
jaunting car's distance away. The roads that radiate inward toward the heart of the town are still lined with labourers' and artisans' thatched cottages long before one reaches the town itself. As one proceeds along them, the cottages give way to shops and public houses which rise higher and more stately as one nears the centre, in the market-place or in the central square. There, quite often, that emporium of the most valuable commodity of all—the local bank—now dominates the scene.

Between the shop-fronts, back lanes lead off to the recesses in which the labourers live; and, off by

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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XXI

OLD PISHROGUES

AMONG the serious nineteenth-century students of Irish folk-life a Dublin surgeon, who is perhaps better known as the father of Oscar Wilde, deserves special mention. Sir William Wilde was not only a frequent contributor to the learned journals but he found time to compile a pioneer catalogue of the Irish antiquities now housed in the National Museum of Ireland. His very active life spanned the Great Famine, and the monumental report on the *Tables of Death* which appeared as Vol. I of Part 5 of the Census of 1851 was largely his work. In it he dwells on the shattering effects of those tragic years, 1845–47, on the immemorial customs and natural poetry of the Irish peasants: 'The closest ties of kinship were dissolved; the most ancient and long-cherished usages of the people were disregarded; the once proverbial gaiety and lightheartedness of the peasant people seemed to have vanished completely, and village merriment or marriage festival was no longer heard or seen throughout the regions desolated by the intensity and extent of the famine.'[1] Another observer noted that the traditions of hospitality were weakened greatly and that padlocks made their first appearance at this time.[2]

Wilde observed that the coming of the railway at about the same period was a contributory factor in the change because it worked to a time-table—more or less—and involved an artificial division of the day instead of an observance of the signs of nature changing with the seasons. Time was related to social activity and had different values at various seasons of the year.

[1] *Census of Ireland* (1851), I, Part 5 (1956), 242.
[2] A. M. Sullivan, *The New Ireland* (1877), 65.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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OLD PISHROGUES

The whistle of the 7.15 now replaced cock-crow. But if it were indeed true that peasant values had perished entirely and that the rural population was transformed into the moronic cattle-herders of Filson Young's *Ireland at the Cross-Roads*, then this book could not have been written. Luckily a mountain farmer will still relate time to nature and refer to a moment of summer twilight, in a memorable phrase quoted by Dr. James Delargy, as 'the time when the dew was thinking of falling'. The wonder is that so much lore and so many relics of pre-famine days have survived. Yet the term 'old pishrogues' which is applied to all varieties of witchcraft and fairy lore—even if sometimes used in awe rather than contempt—shows that these things are now regarded objectively and are no longer an accepted part of social life. Superstitious practices tend to be carried out in secret and to be resorted to only when more rational methods have been tried and found wanting. Many of the old customs, however, have had their life prolonged by children's games, the seasonal bonfires and May Queens becoming their amusements.

Most of the pishrogues relate to fairies and to trees, wells and stones; and that these elder faiths have their roots in a very remote pre-agricultural phase of human evolution is attested by their very general observance among primitive people. As an example we may take the South African Bushmen, one of the lowliest branches of the human family. In a recent report from G. P. van der Post's expedition to the Kalahari we read that in the heart of the Bushman country there are sacred hills which are regarded as the home of very ancient spirits. Van der Post was told that 'right on the top of the central hill there was a spring of water and beside it a tree which bore the fruit of knowledge, and close by the tree a rock with deep marks where the greatest spirit of all had knelt to pray'.[1] The sacred hill-tops, the ancestral spirits, the well of water, the 'gentle' tree and the cup-marked stone are familiar themes in Irish folk tradition. Throughout western Europe, from the fifth century Council of Arles onwards, churchmen denounced those 'who offer vows to trees, or wells, or stones'. The great religions have had to come to terms with such cults, in Monsoon Asia as

[1] *The Times* (14th December, 1955).